

# HARMONY FIRE DISTRICT

P.O. Box 360 – 194 Putnam Pike  
Harmony, R.I. 02829

The regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board was held at the Harmony Fire Station on **Thursday, September 20, 2007.**

Present: Moderator - Raymond Fogarty, Jr.; Treasurer - Sandra Owens;  
Tax Collector - Kimberly Barber; Clerk - Ann Dahlquist;  
Board Members - Louise Michaels & Milton Huston

Absent: Chief Stuart Pearson; Attorney - Fred Mason, Jr.;  
Board Members - James Richards & George Kain

**I. – Meeting Called to Order:** 7:07 pm by Moderator Fogarty.

**II. - Approval of the minutes from the August 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.**

Moderator Fogarty asked the board if there were any discrepancies to note on the minutes from the August 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. If not, he would like to call for a motion to accept them. Louise made a motion to accept the minutes. Milton seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**III. - Treasurer's Report:**

Sandy presented her report for the months of July and August. Beginning balance July 1<sup>st</sup> \$118,841.92 and the ending balance August 31<sup>st</sup> \$390,029.14. Sandy stated that the life insurance expense seems high and she asked Kim to research that account.

Three CD's were created in August. First in General Funds \$52,000.00 at 5.1% for 6-7 months. Next in Sovereign Bank \$97,000.00 at 5.1% for 3 months only, because a lot of these funds will be paid out in December. Last the Truck Fund, which this year is also receiving 5.1%.

Milton made a motion to accept the July treasurer's report. Louise seconded it. The motion carried.

Louise made a motion to accept the August treasurer's report. Milton seconded it. The motion carried.

**IV. - Tax Collector's Report:**

Kim first presented the taxes receivable balances with explanations of the changes and adjustments made. She said that last month she gave the balance billed for July 1<sup>st</sup> and what she had collected as of that date. When she had presented those balances she had mentioned there were still corrections and adjustments to be made to past due accounts. Therefore with the changes made the total balance still seems to be the same, although she has collected payments. Balance to be collected as of the meeting is \$128,328.82, where last month she had reported \$128,228.29. Balance due 2007 bills \$106,062.29, versus last meeting \$114,711.64. Most old receivables on the aging are from the 2006 billing. Older items are mostly made up of camps and trailers, most of which will need to be written off as uncollectable. A discussion followed about the tax collections for camps and trailers. Kim will be putting together a list of uncollectables for the next meeting.

Kim has also spoken with Bridget of Commonwealth Land and Title regarding a tax sale for this year. The notices sent out to past due taxpayers in April that we thought met the 90-day notice policy, was not sufficient. Notice also needs to be made to RI Housing and the Department of Elderly Affairs. So in order for the tax sale to take place before the end of the year, information needs to be submitted before the end of September. Bridget also notified Kim that Commonwealth is no longer handling tax sales. She is handling them herself along with Attorney Glen Andreoni and has faxed a list of their charges. Kim asked the board if they would like her to look into other companies and see what they charge for a comparison. Ray asked her to contact the other fire districts in town, Sandy suggested the town hall, to find out whom they use and what they do.

Ray also asked Kim about tax billing for new properties, if Kim had a total for those new properties. She did not have a total for him and stated that she is still working on property transfers/sales and abatements that she received from the tax assessor. She proceeded to explain that it is quite a problem billing from the tax roll date 12/31/2005, because even with it being downloaded directly there are still almost 2 years of adjustments to be made. She has talked with the Chief about this issue and they would like to propose that for next years billing, we skip the tax roll dated 12/31/06 and use the newest one dated 12/31/07 that will be released in June 2008. It will make our information as current as possible, avoiding a lot of the adjustments and bills returned by the post office. The board thought it was a good and sensible idea and Ray didn't believe it would be a problem with our charter or by-laws. He asked Kim to check with Attorney Mason, before our next meeting, that way this item could be put on the agenda and a motion made to address it.

Next Ray asked what happens when property is taken by foreclosure. Are we notified? Kim said she has received some bankruptcy/foreclosure notices (3) and does not quite know how to proceed with them, so she has forwarded these to Attorney Mason for his advice. When she spoke with Angela Taylor she was told that with bankruptcies they do need to pay their bill, but need to stop charging them interest and you can't go into active collections or tax sale.

Louise made a motion to accept the tax collector's report. Milton seconded it.  
The motion carried.

#### V. - Chief's Report:

Chief Pearson asked Kim and Ray to present portions of his report in his absence. He has been on a review board at the Smithfield Fire Department for the past three nights interviewing applicants for an open position there.

Kim spoke first of events taking place since the last meeting. Gloucester Public Safety Day took place on 8/29. All Gloucester Fire Departments, as well as the Police Department, participated. It was a pretty successful event and was the start of our Associations 'Reflective Sign' sale.

Architect John Aharonian came in once to go over the kitchen renovation plan and a second time to do the detailed drawings of the project. Ray had more information to present on this item. He handed out the schematics that were prepared by Aharonian & Associates, an existing and a proposed. The next step for this project would be to appoint a building committee. Ray suggested this committee be made up of three members of the crew, to be recommended by the Chief, one member of the board and the Chief himself. Because the costs of the project are not yet known and because we want it to be done professionally, the entire project will need to be bid out for a general contractor. The Chief has recommended the hiring of Aharonian & Associates this evening to produce the schematics, the construction drawings and handle the bid specs with the Chief. They would also be the general

administrative overseers of the project and owners rep. One concern Ray had at the last presentation was that we know the crew has a lot of good skills as well as a lot of good ideas and he wants to make sure that they are part of the process. Secondly, he wants to make sure that we have a professional contractor, because we are a fire department and we have to conform to all new fire codes. But we also need to make sure that what is done is up to the standards that we would like to see as a board for the members of our community.

So first the project would be put out to bid for a general contractor. The board would then approve the general contractor. The general contractor would work with the Chief, the building committee and the crew to establish what the crew will do and what the contractor will do. Obviously we are all concerned to find out that the current kitchen hood goes up into the attic and not out. We need to address that problem as soon as possible. What Ray said we need to know is how much it will cost first so we can work with the crew. The Association has agreed to pay a certain amount of money, whether they have the ability to pay as much as \$15,000.00 as initially discussed, we do not know. Perhaps \$10,000.00 or \$5,000.00? We need to get back together with them and have them present as a sub-committee. Everyone should have input at this point, because this is probably a thirty-year change and we're probably not going to do that much more. The Chief has also asked us to look at the interior of the building as part of this renovation, to see if there is anything else we can do to make it more friendly and cheery. Specifics regarding this were not discussed. Specs will be drawn up before the bid goes out and will come again before the board. However the official board appointments will be brought to us, so we will know the names of the three crew members and the board member before the next meeting. The Chief is recommending a \$4,800.00 stipend for Aharonian & Associates. This is made up of \$1,000.00 for schematics + \$2,000.00 for construction drawings + \$1,800.00 bid/general administration/owners rep.

Milton made a motion to accept the \$4,800.00 stipend for Aharonian & Associates at specified. Seconded by Louise. The motion carried.

Ray nominated Milton for the Building Committee and he accepted.

Next Kim continued to tell of events since the last meeting. On September 2<sup>nd</sup> some members of the department participated in the Oakland-Mapleville Fire Department Muster. The Chief attended all day. Three trophies were won and all had a great time.

Recent personnel and training items were as follows. Three crew members, Lt. Donna DeConte and Privates Kevin Farley and Linda Nichols, completed a P.A.L.S. course held at the West Gloucester Fire Department. This is a pediatric advanced life support training. Also probationary crew member C.J. Tasca passed his E.M.T. exam and Private Joseph Dougherty is currently testing for the Cardiac level.

Also, this coming Monday night the Harmony Fire Department is hosting a Northern League Drill. The drill will take place at the Fogarty Memorial School, with a cold buffet to follow at the station.

Ray continued with the next item under the Chief's Report. A handout about strategic planning was distributed to everyone for their review. He then mentioned that at our next meeting there will be a strategic planning speaker coming in for about ½ hour to address the board. This will be in addition to our regular meeting time. He also asked Kim if she could call around and possibly get some examples of other fire districts or small non-profits strategic plans, business documents or planning documents, so we can have a sense of what other departments are doing. A strategic planning committee will need to be created. The committee should total approximately seven people, with a community member

chair for the board, at least one district board member, someone external (from another town) and the Chief himself. Ray will also recommend someone from Bryant College to sit on the committee. The ultimate goal is to create a report, perhaps eight pages in length, which would be ready to present at our next annual meeting. Then we could begin to implement some of the strategies in the following year, making sure not to overwhelm the full time staff or volunteers with multiple changes at once. Ray does not think there will be that many complete changes anyway, just enhancements and improvements.

Ray nominated Louise for the Strategic Planning Committee and she accepted.

A card was received by Ray from Mike Recorvits thanking the board for the stipend and letter of appreciation that had been sent to him. The card was passed around for board members to read.

**VI. - Committee Reports:** None given.

**VII. - Old Business:**

At the last meeting Ray had asked Kim to prepare letters for the members that Chief Pearson had commended to the board. Kim had the letters ready and Ray read one to the board. All agreed they were appropriate, they were signed by Ray and will be mailed.

**VIII. - New Business:** Addressed throughout reports.

**IX. - Public Input:** No one present.

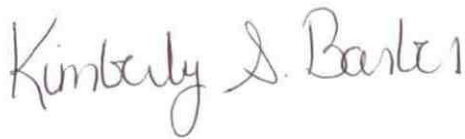
**X. – Executive Session:** None needed.

**XI. – Adjournment:**

Milton made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Louise seconded it. The motion carried. The September meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board was adjourned at 7:49 pm.

The next meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board  
will be 7:00 pm, **October 18, 2007** at the Harmony Fire Department.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kimberly S. Barber".

Kimberly S. Barber  
Tax Collector/Secretary